

An ANSWER to the Lord *Haversham's*
SPEECH, In a Committee of the whole
House of Peers, on *Wednesday*, Nov. 19. 1707.

~~147~~
142

I Am, my Lord, I must confess, an humble Admirer of your Lordship's Eloquence, and Choice of Words; and not any way an Enemy to your Freedom of Speech, which is, and has been, the Life and Soul of LIBERTY in former English Parliaments, and as it is the Property of every fitting Member, so it is often a Cordial to the Subject, a Portion that drives out the Distemper, and lets him know something near the Certainty of his Condition; but then, my Lord, we are to consider, that a Wise Physician never lets his Patient know the Worst; and it has often prov'd as dangerous Physick to the Mind, to tell a Man in a Consumption he is near his End, as to Administer unwholesome Remedies to his Body. Your Lordship is in the right; every Man will, for all that, endeavour to the last Gasp, yet these are means that hasten his End as much as prevent it.

My Lord, the Wise Considerate Men of our Nation, that know there are some unhappy Truths in your Oration, will undoubtedly be very well affected with the Subject; but who knows what a hair-brain'd Multitude may do, that are apt to catch at imperfect meanings, and make the worst of a Thing, and will not easily be beaten out again, but that their Condition is worse than it is? This is, my Lord, to set 'em a Grumbling, to make 'em sicker than they really are; contrary to all, that ever my Reason taught me, was the Wisdom and Practice of Politique Government. I have observ'd with what Diligence this Maxim has been pursued in France, who by a thousand sundry Arts and Methods, have endeavour'd to buoy up the sinking Spirits of the People, where even sometimes there has not been the least Shadow of Truth to colour their Misfortunes; and I cannot think that what is Policy in one State, can be Indiscretion in another; nor your Lordship's answering, That we are not in France, be any Instance to me, that the Method is well timed in Britain: I may as well suppose, that when the Wind blows North at Westminster, it should blow South at London-Bridge, and yet believe it Natural.

This, my Lord, is clear and evident, and yet not the most that might be said on that Subject; I appeal to Those who are capable of judging the Equity of our Condition; and who have a nearer sight of your Lordship's Integrity in Speeching, than we who are seated at too great a distance to be thoroughly struck with a convincing Light of what may be either the Interest, or the Consequence; and yet, if Experience be able to instruct us, I have form'd some Ideas, which tho' they may be imperfect, serve and encourage me to believe, there may be something in't more than our real Misfortunes; they have indeed been greater this Year, than in any other since the Progress of the War, and yet I don't find that your Lordship was ever less silent in Parliament, tho' for these four Years past, at least, you have been pleas'd to give us a Speech.

I am at an equal Distance from discerning your Lordship's Conduct in this Affair, and from endeavouring to discern rightly the true State of the Nation; and yet, I think, I know enough of either to assure myself, that whatever is amiss in the One, is not at all mended in the Other; and nothing can convince me more of what I say, than that, whether Ill or Well, Right or Wrong, it would have been of more real Weight and Significance from a Second Person: To speak plainly, from any other Man; Not to tax your Lordship's Loyalty, and Zeal for your Country, or draw any malicious Inferences from what has been charg'd at your Door a hundred times; but because there is a kind of Something or other in't, that would not be very unpleasant to your Lordship's Disposition; there would be Putting in, and Turning out, as your Lordship hints plainly you would have it, and then there wou'd be the Vanity to Triumph in the Success of your repeated Eloquence, if not
over

over the Fall of some G—t M—n, not much in your Lordship's Favour. And here I conclude what I have to say, as to what may be the Intent or Consequence of your Lordship's Speech. I shall take leave now to speak to some Things in it, that give it too gross an Air for our sickle boisterous Constitution.

Your Lordship says, Our Condition is very low and desperate; it may be so indeed: But before your Lordship was pleas'd to be so very concise and positive on this Head, I am as confident in what I am going to say, as your Lordship is, or can possibly be, of what you have said; That there were abundance of People who thought otherwise, abundance of People that said otherwise; and I am willing to believe, abundance of People that hope otherwise still; but if it be really so, I pray Heav'n avert it; and that your Lordship's Words may be of greater Weight now than in preceding Speeches. I cou'd wish they wou'd have no other Effect upon the People at this time; for truly, my Lord, I cannot be a Friend to a Method so unlikely to do us any good, as that therewas no way to heal one Wound, without endangering another; a good Surgeon leaves no Scar, but your Lordship's too hasty and violent Application, leaves the Core of the Distemper at our Hearts; and when the People have catch'd the Malady, the matter will be to cure 'em of the Relapse; for if they fancy themselves in a desperate low Condition now, what will they do, when they begin to feel the Effects of your Lordship's Words; the Distemper (Grief I mean) will be incurable; they will imagine Dangers always at hand, tho' there be really none, and will have no Heart to resist or oppose 'em, when they do come. Our Gentry will grow careless, and our Commonalty heartless, surmising strange Things, so that we shall find the Effect in taking off the Love of the People. We shall have Taxes paid with an unwilling Hand, the Poor work with an uneasy Mind, and finally the War hang heavy on our Hands: We have hitherto been buoy'd up with our Successes, and talk'd of nothing but pulling down the French King; Nay, Her Majesty in her late Speech, is graciously pleas'd to give us hopes still, of accomplishing a lasting and honourable Peace; What then, are all our Rejoycings come to this? Were our Shouts and Huzzas nothing but a mock Triumph? Surely, my Lord, we may be allow'd to lose a little. If we are not able to bear accidental Losses, what shou'd we have been if the French had beat us, which might have been War's but a common Chance. Are all our Victories buried in one Misfortune? 'Tis very hard; and I hope will be very difficult, to make the People believe they are undone by one Mischance; it puts me to consider, what a sad Condition we had been in, had the War gone against us, if even after 3 or 4 successful Campaigns we are not able to bear one that has gone a little against us. What can be a greater Discouragement to the Soldiery? It is enough to slacken and enervate their Courage, to let 'em know that they have all this while been Fighting to no purpose; for it amounts to that, if no better is come of it.

Truly, my Lord, I am too much concern'd, to speak lightly of a Matter of this Importance, yet I find it less difficult to believe that your Lordship gives some unhappy Turn to it, that is not really in it, (for Eloquence, we know, my Lord, like Artificial Beauty, is able to give a Lustre, which in a common Dress is not the same) than to take it for granted, and content my self, that Matters are meerly as your Lordship relates them. I shall only speak a Word more to the Speech, and that is the Root of it, the Ministry: What Harangues and Encomiums have we had from all Parts, of the happy and successful Measures that have flow'd from our Council at home; and yet your Lordship, in one single Breath, overturns it all; when Men like me were content to believe most of our Misfortunes were casual: Truly, my Lord, to say no more, it must be a happy Ministry indeed, that is not fallible; tho' if ours is faulty, as your Lordship says, the rest that I have to say, shall be, to pray, that your Lordship's Words may be receiv'd as an Oracle, and have Power to change the Cause of Misfortunes.